

REPORT
OF THE
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
FOR THE
MUNICIPAL BOROUGH
OF
WILTON

For the Year ended 31st December,
1947.

SANITARY AND HEALTH OFFICIALS.

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Annual Report

for the year ended December, 1947,
on Public Health Matters in the
Borough of Wilton.

General Description of the Borough.

The Borough of Wilton, one of the oldest boroughs in the country lies in the South of Wiltshire in the valleys of the Wylde and Nadder. It has a population of some 2,450 inhabitants, which has varied little from year to year in the past. The future may, however, show a marked increase in the population once the present restrictions on house building are removed, now that the Southern Command Headquarters are located in Wilton.

The character of the town remains unchanged with no new industries being started in recent years and with little new building in the centre of the town. The majority of the inhabitants are employed at the carpet factory, felt mills or the agricultural works. The remainder are mainly employed in the local shops (Wilton is a small market centre), on the railways, on the roads, or in the City of Salisbury.

In the centre of the town especially, a large number of the houses are old, inconvenient and very closely crowded together, and fall well below the standards of modern housing, without actually being of the class known as slum property. There is still a very marked shortage of houses in the town, more especially of a good type of house for rental. The following figures give more details :—

Population, 2,450.

Acreage, 2,681.

Number of inhabited houses, 781

Number of working class houses, 536.

Number of council houses, 142, including 10 temporary
(148 at June, 1948).

Industries and Trades, Wilton Royal Carpet Factory.
Wilton Felt Mills.

Messrs. Brewers Agricultural
Engineers.

Rateable Value (1st April, 1947) £13,704.

Product of a Penny Rate £54.

Highways, Administered by Wilts County Council
(unclassified roads under contract).

Refuse Disposal, by contract.

Sewage Disposal, works outside the Borough.

Water Supply, Public supply from the Corporation's
Waterworks at Ditchampton.

Gas Supply, Salisbury Gas Co.

Vital Statistics to December, 1947.

Births.

During the year forty-four children were born alive ; of these, twenty-six were males, and eighteen were females. There were no illegitimate births.

Particulars of births.

Live Births—	Total	M	F	} Birth Rate per 1,000 of estimated resident population, 17·9.
Legitimate	44	26	18	
Illegitimate	0	0	0	

Stillbirths.

No stillbirths were registered during the year.

Deaths.

Forty deaths occurred during the year as follows :—

Total	M	F	} Death rate per 1,000 of estimated resident population, 16·3.
40	20	20	

Causes of death—last year's figures in parentheses.

Premature births	...	...	...	(2)	0
Congenital Malformations	...	...	...	(1)	1
Cancer	...	...	...	(2)	6
Intracranial Vascular Lesions	...	...	...	(3)	6
Heart Disease	...	..	...	(11)	7
Digestive Diseases	...	...	...	(0)	4
Other Circulatory Diseases	...	...	...	(1)	1
Bronchitis...	...	...	...	(1)	3
Pneumonia	...	...	...	(1)	0
Other Respiratory Diseases	...	...	...	(0)	1
Tuberculosis (all forms)	...	...	...	(1)	0
Nephritis	...	...	...	(1)	3
Other causes	...	...	...	(5)	8
Road Traffic Accident	...	...	...	(1)	0

Deaths from Puerperal causes.

Rate per 1,000
(live and still)

	Deaths	births
Puerperal Sepsis	... 0	0
Other Puerperal causes	.. 0	0
Total	... 0	0

Death Rate of Infants under one year of age.

Number of deaths	...	...	1
All infants per 1,000 live births	...	...	22·73
Legitimate infants per 1,000 legitimate live births	...	...	22·73
Illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births	...	...	0

General Statement on the Health of the Borough.

The death rate for 1947 was higher than usual for the Borough, being 16·3 per 1,000. This is the highest death rate since 1932.

The birth rate, 17·9 per 1,000, whilst being a little less than that of the previous year (18·8) is well above the average figure of recent years.

Whilst the death rate was higher this year, it will be observed that the rise was not the result of an unusual increase in the deaths from any one particular disease, although there was a rise in deaths from cancer. This was off-set by a fall in the deaths from heart disease. Not a single death occurred from any infectious disease, including all forms of tuberculosis. There was only one death of a child under the age of one year. Once again there were no fatal maternity cases or deaths associated with child-birth.

There was an epidemic of measles during the early months of the year, mainly confined to school children, 96 cases being notified, but this had ended by the end of May. It is pleasing to report that apart from one case of erysipelas, no other cases of infectious disease were notified.

SECTION B:

General Provision of Health Services for the Borough.

The Medical Officer spends his whole time in Public Health work, being Medical Officer for the neighbouring rural district of Salisbury and Wilton and also of Mere and Tisbury R.D.C.

His qualifications are Bachelor of Science (Honours degree), Bachelor of Medicine and of Surgery, Diploma of Public Health of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons, England, Certificates of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, London, etc.

There was a change in Sanitary Inspectors during the year. Mr. Cooke left to take up another appointment at the beginning of the year, and Mr. Dewhurst commenced duties in March. Mr. Dewhurst is a fully qualified Sanitary Inspector, and is employed full time in the Borough.

Contribution to these two officers' salaries is made under the Public Health Acts.

During the year Dr. Lane continued to act as Medical Officer to the Infant Welfare and Antenatal Clinic.

There are two midwives who devote part of their time to the Borough and part to the Rural area. They also act as school nurses. They are responsible to a local committee acting in conjunction with the County Nursing Association.

Home nursing is not yet specially catered for beyond the amount given by the two nurses mentioned above. An attempt was made to set up a service but this unfortunately failed.

Laboratory Facilities.

Examination of swabs, and other bacteriological work is carried out at the Greville Laboratory in Salisbury Infirmary. The laboratory is recognised for the examination of milk by the Ministry of Health. Work here is most satisfactorily and promptly carried out.

Hospital service available for the Area.

- (1) *Infectious Fevers.* Joint Districts Isolation Hospital, Old Sarum.
- (2) *General Cases.* General Infirmary, Salisbury.
- (3) *Children.* Various Homes under supervision of the County Council,
- (4) *Maternity.* Beds are available at Salisbury Infirmary.
- (5) *Venereal Disease.* Salisbury Infirmary Clinic.
- (6) *Tuberculosis.* Winsley Sanatorium and Harnwood Hospital take the majority of cases; beds are also to be had through the County Council at Savernake and at Alton, or at Bath Orthopædic Hospital.
- (7) *Chronic Sick.* Provision is arranged for these in Tower House, etc.
- (8) *Orthopædic.* Bath Orthopædic Hospital.

- (9) *Mental Cases.* Special schools outside the County, or other County Institutions through the County Council. There is now more adequate provision within the County boundaries.
- (10) $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \textit{Puerperal Fever} \\ \textit{Puerperal Pyrexia} \\ \textit{Ophthalmia Neonatorum} \end{array} \right\}$ Arrangements are made and consultations offered by the County Council.
- (11) *Ear, Nose and Throat cases.* Salisbury Infirmary.

Hospital service as a whole.

There are no hospitals or nursing homes in the Area itself, and none are necessary, the present arrangements being satisfactory and the area well served. Full advantage is taken of Hospital treatment.

Salisbury Infirmary is equipped to deal with operative cases, and contains an up-to-date pathological laboratory.

There are no maternity or nursing homes in the Area.

The maternal mortality is, as it was last year, nil.

Clinics and Treatment Centres.

(1) *Infant Welfare.* A centre is provided by a committee of ladies supported by voluntary contributions, by the payment of a small fee, and by a subsidy. Antenatal work is also carried out.

(2) *Other Clinics.* There are in Salisbury available for and used by this district, a Tuberculosis Dispensary Venereal Diseases Clinic, and an Orthopædic Centre, provided by the County Council.

There is no school clinic for the District, neither are there day nurseries or light clinics.

Legislation in force in the Area.

There are bye-laws with respect to Cleansing of Footways and Pavements, Cleansing of Earth-closets, Privies, Ashpits and Cesspools ; for dealing with nuisances from snow, filth, keeping of animals, slaughterhouses ; and regarding cemetery management, dating from 29th April, 1891.

Building bye-laws were adopted 27th August, 1924.

SECTION C.

Sanitary Circumstances of the Area.*Water Supply.*

Wilton has an adequate supply of pure and wholesome water piped throughout the Borough. Although the source is from a shallow well, analysis almost invariably gives highly satisfactory results, and constant care is taken to guard against possible sources of pollution. In addition to this, although the water is efficiently treated by the chloramine process, samples are taken also of the untreated water; these samples are almost invariably found satisfactory.

The Borough has, of course, a piped supply throughout with up-to-date pumps and a satisfactory reservoir, and, as has already been explained, there is quite a considerable surplus here available from existing works.

The present source and plant is capable of supplying a much greater population than that of Wilton itself and the Council are willing to sell the water outside their own area. That they are in a position to do so is proved by the enormous quantity supplied to the army during war-time. As shown above, the quality of the water is good. It is hard water—total hardness 36·0, temporary hardness 29·0 permanent hardness 7·0—there is thus no fear of plumbosolvent action. Recently a small extension was made to supply a pair of cottages in the rural area.

*Report on the Analysis and Bacteriological
Examination of a Sample of Water.*

Report on the Analyses of a Sample of Water received on 16th April, 1947, from Rising main at Wilton Borough Council Waterworks, prior to treatment.

Physical characters—Excellent.

Chemical—			Parts per 100,000
Reaction	...	... Alkaline p.H.	7.3
Saline and free Ammonia	...	...	—
Organic (or “albuminoid”) ammonia	...	...	—
Oxygen absorbed from permanganate in two hours at 27°C.	..	...	0.003
Chlorides	...	...	2.0
Nitrogen as nitrates	...	...	1.0
Total Hardness	...	...	22.4
(a) Temporary	...	...	18.2
(b) Permanent	...	...	4.2
Poisonous Metals	...	...	—
Nitrites	...	...	—
Microscopical examination of the Sediment	...	...	—

Bacteriological—

Total Colonies growing at 37° C in 48 hours— Nil per 1 c.c. of Water.

Number of Coli-Aerogenes organisms—Nil per 100 c.c. of Water at 37° C.

Number of Fæcal types of B. Coli — Nil per 100 c.c. of Water at 44° C.

Opinion—Neither chemical nor bacteriological examinations show any evidences of pollution.

Closest Accommodation.

The water carriage system is in operation in nearly all the closets in Wilton, but there are still a few cases where it is impossible to connect to the sewer.

Public Cleansing and Refuse Removal.

The cleansing and repair of public highways and foot-paths is carried out by the County Council by contract. Recently several more lengths of roads came under their direct jurisdiction, thus reducing the amount contracted for. The work on the whole is carried out in an efficient manner, and minor complaints are usually arranged amicably with the local county surveyor.

Refuse removal is undertaken by a private contractor who has served the Borough satisfactorily for many years now, often, during the war, under difficult circumstances. He has now had in use a new and much more satisfactory vehicle, so that the main complaint about this service is removed. Minor complaints arise from time to time, but on investigation these are found to be no fault of our contractor.

Inspection of Meat and Other Foods.

The policy of centralised slaughtering adopted during the war is still continued, so that there has been no slaughter of animals for food in the Borough. The meat in butchers' shops still, of course, is liable to inspection, as are tinned and other foods offered for sale. During the year a small amount of varied foods had to be condemned for various reasons as shown in the table given below.

Canned Vegetables	46 lbs	Canned Meat	27 lbs
Canned Fruit	152 lbs	Bacon	12 lbs
Syrup	12 lbs	Soup	4 tins
Cereals	1 lb	Canned Fish	66 lbs
Jam	3½ lbs	Biscuits	3 lbs
Evaporated Milk	157 tins	Pickles	34 jars
Margarine	45½ lbs	Other articles	5 lbs
Home Killed Meat	21 lbs		

Total weight of foodstuffs condemned during year, 572 lbs.

Milk Supply to the Borough.

The cowsheds and dairies within the Borough boundary are as a rule well kept; this year was no exception. The whole of the milk supplied in the Borough is from Tuberculin Tested herds.

Factories Act, 1937.

Within the Borough there are 19 factories with power and 10 without. The table on next page gives further details.

Factories—Premises.

	No. on register	No. of inspections	No. of written notices	No. of occupiers prosecuted
Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, & 6 are to be enforced by the Local Author- ities	10	12	1	—
Factories not includ- ed in (1) to which Section 7 applies				
(a) Subject to the Local Authorities (Transfer of Enforce- ment) Order, 1938	19	9	—	—
(b) Others	—	—	—	—
Other premises un- der the Act (exclud- ing out - workers premises)	—	—	—	—
Total ...	29	21	1	—

Factories—Defects.

Particulars,	No. of cases in which defects were found.			
	Found	Remedied	Referred to H.M. Inspector	Cases in which prose- cutions were instituted
Want of cleanliness	2	2	1	—
Sanitary Conven- iences unsuitable or defective ...	—	—	—	—
Total ...	2	2	1	—

Pollution of Rivers and Streams.

This year, as in former years, the deposit of tins, etc., into the river was continued within the precincts of the Borough. The local council have from time to time appealed to the Police and to the Catchment Board concerned with the upkeep.

The County Council are of course responsible for the administration of the relevant Act.

Fair Ground.

New Ladies' and Gentlemen's Conveniences have been constructed on the Fair Ground, giving much more suitable accommodation.

Eradication of Insect Pests.

These pests are extremely rare in the Borough.

The Borough has so far been extremely fortunate in the class of tenant occupying the Council Houses, and very little trouble has been experienced with insect pests of any kind.

Smoke Abatement.

No action has been necessary this year.

Housing.

It is pleasing to report that during the year under review the first few of the Corporation's Post War houses have been completed and occupied. These are on the Grovely Down Estate at Ditchampton. They are all traditionally-built three-bedroomed houses, and they have a very attractive appearance in their rural setting. At the time of writing, the contract for the first 14 houses has been completed, and the Council have just learned they are to be allowed to erect a further eight houses for the remainder of the year.

Whilst progress has undoubtedly been made with the erection of Council houses there still remains a great deal to do, and at the present rate of house building it will be

many years before the whole of the population of Wilton is suitably housed. There is still a waiting list of well over a hundred applicants, the majority of whom are without homes of their own. In addition, a further hundred houses are required for those families living in unsatisfactory houses or houses which are overcrowded.

During 1947 two houses were erected by private enterprise in Victoria Road, and at the time of writing a further two dwellings are in course of construction. In addition, existing buildings were converted to provide four additional dwellings and another is almost completed.

Taken as a whole, the post-war housing record within the Borough shows that to date 33 new dwellings have been provided, made up of 18 new houses, 10 temporary houses and five conversions.

Whilst it is very necessary to erect new houses with all possible speed, it is considered that the condition of many of the existing houses should not be forgotten. In many cases it has not been possible to carry out any repairs or structural improvements for many years, and unless it is made possible for these repairs to be carried out in the near future, the houses will soon fall into the class not capable of being rendered fit at a reasonable cost.

Council Houses.

At the beginning of the year most of the Council houses were in need of some repair, and I am pleased to report that a good deal of lee-way caused by the war years has now been made up. The houses in Wishford Road have been completely re-roofed, also the painting of Fair View Road houses has been completed. The Council are to have concrete paths laid down to the houses at the Hollows, and further external painting. Generally the Council houses are clean and well kept by the tenants. There were no complaints or evidence of infestation by insect pests during the year.

Housing Act, 1936.

Statement of work carried out during the
year ended 31st December, 1947, under
the above Act in the Borough of Wilton.

1. *Inspection of dwelling-houses during the year :*

(1) (a) Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	...	...	...	152
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose				193
(2) (a) Number of dwelling-houses (included under sub-head (1) above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925	...	...	...	0
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose				0
(3) Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	..	...	...	0
(4) Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	...	...	...	27

2. *Remedy of defects during the year without service of formal notices :*

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers	21
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3, *Action under Statutory Powers during the year :*

A. Proceedings under Section 9 of the Housing Act, 1936 :

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs ... o

(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notice :

(a) by Owners o

(b) by Local Authority in default of Owners ... o

B. Proceedings under Public Health Acts :

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied o

(2) Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices :

(a) by Owners o

(b) by Local Authority in default of Owners ... o

C. Proceedings under Sections 11 and 25 of the Housing Act, 1936 :

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made ... o

(2) Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders ... o

D. Proceedings under Section 12 of the Housing Act, 1936 :

(1) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were made o

(2) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the tenement or room having been rendered fit o

4. *Housing Act, 1946—Overcrowding.*

Owing to the movement of the population during the recent years it is not possible to give a true figure as to the extent of overcrowding now existing within the Borough.

SECTION F.

Prevalence of and Control over Infectious Diseases.

The notifications of infectious diseases during the year were mainly confined to measles, of which a total of 96 cases were notified. Nearly the whole of these occurred during the months of May and June. Apart from these cases the number of notifications of infectious disease was again remarkably small, even taking into account the small size of the Borough.

Once again, not a single case of Diphtheria occurred within the Borough. Whilst it cannot be proved that this is a direct result of immunisation against the disease, it can be reasonably concluded that, with the absence of the disease in recent years, immunisation has at least played its part in reducing diphtheria from being one of the most prevalent and serious of all the infectious diseases in this country.

Immunisation is carried out by Wiltshire County Council, and the following table shows the number of children in the Borough who have completed a full course of immunisation

Age at 31.12.47	Under							Total under
	1	1	2	3	4	5-9	10-14	15
Born in year	1947	'46	'45	'44	'43	'38-'42	'33-'37	
No. Immunised	1	28	18	22	17	135	146	367
Estimated mid-year population 1947	Children under 5				Children 5 - 14			
	170				310			480

The above table shows that of pre-school children 50·6% have completed a full course of immunisation, whilst in children of school age the figure rises to 90·6%, which gives a figure for the total child population of 76·4%.

General facilities for treatment in case of Infectious Disease.

Cases of Infectious disease from this district go to the Salisbury and District Joint Isolation Hospital at Old Sarum. The hospital is a good one, admirably run, and has served this and other districts for many years now in an efficient and entirely satisfactory manner.

The demand for accommodation varies of necessity from time to time, but up to date no case of infectious disease urgently requiring accommodation has had to be refused admission.

From this district we send as a rule all cases of diphtheria, nearly all cases of scarlet fever, and in addition any complicated case of any other infectious disease needing special nursing, or where the medical attendant is satisfied that home conditions are such as to render the spread of the disease more likely, or retard or endanger the chance of recovery of the patient. No one had to be sent in under the latter heading this year.

Cases are sent in within a few hours of diagnosis which no doubt has helped us in the past to maintain our very satisfactory record in regard to secondary cases. Cases are sent in by ambulance and if necessary arrangements can be made for return by ambulance. Private arrangements are however made for return in most cases. An investigation of the premises and disinfection take place in infectious diseases such as, diphtheria, scarlet fever, tuberculosis, etc. Bedding, etc., is put through the steam disinfectant in the case of scarlet fever and tuberculosis.

Notifiable diseases (other than tuberculosis) during the year 1947 :—

Disease	Number of cases	Admitted to Isolation Hospital	Deaths
Smallpox	0	0	0
Scarlet Fever	0	0	0
Diphtheria	0	0	0
Acute Pneumonia	1	0	0
Puerperal Fever	0	0	0
Erysipelas	1	0	0
Infantile Paralysis	0	0	0
Dysentery	0	0	0

School intimations of infectious disease were again found helpful, especially in regard to outbreaks of measles and of mumps, etc.

Prevention of Tuberculosis and Blindness.

No action was necessary under regulations governing the employment of persons in the milk trade who were suffering from tuberculosis, nor for the prevention of blindness.

Tuberculosis.

Tuberculosis comes under the control of the County Council who hold regular clinics in Salisbury for this area. No deaths occurred from the disease during the year, either from notified or unnotified cases.

G. NAPIER,

Medical Officer of Health.

